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If a student's perception of his environment affects his behavior in it, the college should have a measure of it as additional data for educational decisions. This would be added to the student's personal data file already maintained by the college, and used in developing new programs and policies; in self-study; to compare with normative data; to clarify direction of change; for selection of students; to inform prospective students, parents, and high school counselors; to determine maximal student environment; and to note influences of student/environment interaction. This study proposed to find any differences in the perceptions of four groups of students on the items on the College and University Environment Scales. A group of 22 students was randomly selected from each of the college's four programs--Associate in Arts (AA) in Science (AS), in Applied Science (AAS), and Continuing Education (C). In the 76% response were 22 AA students, 20 AS, 15 AAS, and 10 C. The AA group scored high on propriety, low on awareness; the AS was low on both practicality and awareness; the AAS was low on practicality and awareness, but very high on propriety; and the C group was low on awareness, community, and practicality, but high on propriety. According to national norms, both the total sample and the four groups were high on propriety and low on awareness. Conventionality outranked assertiveness; personal, poetic, and political concerns were absent. The four groups differed greatly on the scholarship scale. (HH)

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STUDENT ENVIRONMENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF A NEW COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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If it is generally accepted that a person's perceptions of his environment affect his behavior in that environment, then the college should have a measurement of the perceptions to use in planning. Behavior is typically conceived as determined by an interaction between individual and environment, between person and situation. (Pace, 1963) Thus, to possess data on the individual and neglect to have a measure of the perceived environment by the individual is to be without all of the available data upon which to base educational decisions.

The purpose of this project is to add to the personal data the dimension of the perceived environment. The college environment is the stimulus. This stimulus is the added dimension. To describe the major features of this complex environment as a whole and by identifiable parts so that administrators, faculty and students can more effectively make educational decisions in their realm of authority is central to the study.

Gelso and Sims (1968) found that the perceptions of the junior college environment indicated a person's location and position in an institution significantly affected some of the perceptions to the extent that the student personnel workers should consider this when attempting to develop and implement programs and policies. Pace (1963) suggests that the results of environmental measurement be used

1. for institutional self study
2. for comparing itself with normative data
3. for clarifying the directions in which they hope to promote change
4. for the recruitment and admission of students

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5. to increase the scope of information available to prospective students, parents, and high school counselors
6. to determine what kinds of students perform best in what kinds of environments
7. to understand that the nature of the environment, as well as the nature of the students, will influence what happens

What are the students perceptions of the college environment? There is no difference between students perceptions for each of the subgroups on each of the scales as measured by the College and University Environment Scales (CUES).

Method

Every student enrolled in the college is in one and only one program area. The program areas are:

1. Associate in Arts (AA): This degree program is for students planning to pursue a Baccalaureate degree and concentrate his studies in one of the following fields in Liberal Arts; Arts, Education, English, Foreign Language, Music, Pre-Law, Social Science and Speech.
2. Associate in Science (AS): This degree program is for students planning to pursue a Baccalaureate degree and concentrate his studies in such fields as Business, Education, Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Mathematics, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Physics, and Veterinary Medicine.
3. Associate in Applied Science (AAS): This degree program is for the student planning to pursue a career program for full time employment

in such fields as Business Management or Secretarial Science, Accounting, Agriculture, Industrial or Engineering Technologies, Electronic Data Processing, Radiologic Technology and Nursing. The program is designed for immediate employment.

4. Continuing Education (C): Adult education or general education programs are designed for students who do not intend to qualify for or transfer to a degree program. Students enrolled in this program are those who wish to satisfy their own personal needs through education and use the experiences for self-improvement, greater service to family and community, and/or increase opportunities for employment and advancement in vocational and occupational areas.

The AA area had 322 enrollees. The AS area had 318 enrolled. AAS had a total of 309 and C had 355. The total population is 1304. A list of all students enrolled was consecutively numbered and using a table of random numbers a sample of 88 students was selected. Twenty-two people were delineated in each of the four program areas. The answer sheets were marked with a color code to indicate the program of the individual. The sample represents about six and three fourths per cent of the population. Sixty-seven responded yielding a seventy-six per cent return. There were twenty-two AA returns, twenty AS returns, fifteen AAS returns, and ten C returns.

The CUES was chosen as the environmental measurement. A cover letter accompanied the test and answer sheet. The returned answer sheets were sent to the Educational Testing

Service for scoring. The results were scored by scale and item. Each scale was given a score using the 66+ percent method. A percentile score was reported for every item on each scale.

The descriptive data were arrived at by using the 66+ scoring method. The number of items in each scale marked in the direction of the key by 66+ percent of the subsample were counted, yielding a scale score. The total sample score is the number of the items in each scale delineated by the 66+ method for the sample as a whole.

By using the separate scale scores for each scale, for each subsample, and counting each response in the direction of the key; the chi-square statistic was used to test for differences. Secondly, the number of responses in the keyed direction and the number of possible responses was compared for each subgroup on each scale. The chi-square statistic was used to test for differences.

Results

The descriptive data yielded were compared with the norm group as delineated by Pace. (1963)

Insert Table 1 about here

The score on practicality for the total sample was 9 which corresponded to the norm group percentile score of thirty-seven. Each scale has thirty items in it and the scale score can range from 0 to 30. The community scale score was 9 for a percentile score of thirty-seven when compared with the norm. The scores on awareness and propriety indicate the low and high areas in the students perceptions.

The sample was so designed so as to enable subsamples to be delineated. The descriptive data from the subsamples are included in table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

Each identifiable subgroup perceive the environment in its own way. AA indicated a high score in propriety (IV) when compared to the national norms and a low score in awareness (III). The AS group indicated low scores in practicality (I) and awareness (III). The subgroup AAS scored low on awareness (III) and practicality (I). The propriety (IV) score for this group was the highest score attained by any group. Three low scores on practicality (I), awareness (III), and community (II) was evidenced by C group. The high score in propriety (IV) was also depicted by C.

The descriptive scores were those indicated by Pace. The 66+ method, which indicates the items in each scale which has two thirds or more agreement by the sample in the direction of the key, was the score for each scale. The belief that an item represents the environment when it is indicated two thirds or more of the time was accepted and used to describe the climate.

The hypothesis that there was no difference between the perceptions of the college environment as measured by the CUES or between the perceptions of the identified groups on the campus as measured by the CUES was tested in two manners.

Insert Table 3 about here

Prior to examing the responses, the responses had to be evaluated to see if the return of seventy-six percent was acceptable in light of the numbers returned in each subgroup of the sample. Examination by the X^2 test resulted in the measurement 5.1791 with three degrees of freedom; indicating that the number of returns, in the manner they were returned

can be attributed to chance.

Insert Table 4 about here

Scrutiny of the number of true responses for each scale for each subgroup hielded a chi-square of 5.37 with 12 degrees of freedom. The result was not significant at either the .01 level of confidence or the .05 level of confidence. This seemed to uphold the hypothesis that there was no difference between how the subgroups perceived the campus environment.

The chi-square measurement of the total perception was high enough to add credence to the descriptive data and together they indicated that more careful examination appeared in order.

Insert Table 5 about here

Each of the sample subgroups were compared with their scores, true or false, for each of the items in each scale one scale at a time. Practicality, community awareness, and propriety were found not to be significant at either the .01 level or .05 level of significance. The scholarship scale had a X^2 of 8.28 which was significant at the .05 level of confidence. None of the scores for the scales seemed to be high enough to cause further investigation.

Discussion

The descriptive data indicated, both in the total sample and in the subsamples, that the propriety scale was scored high in comparison with the national norms and the awareness scale was scored low. These two characteristics may be related to a number of factors: the characteristics of the

perceivers, their familiarity with the institution, or their particular location within the institution. (Pace, 1963) In particular the students perceived this environment as polite and considerate. Yet, caution, thoughtfulness, group standards and decorum was important. Conventionality as opposed to assertiveness, risk - taking, and demonstrative type behavior was evident. The push toward expansion and enrichment; of personality, of societal horizons, and of expressiveness was not evident. The opposite - a concern for and emphasis upon the three sorts of meaning; personal, poetic, and political was absent - evidenced by the low awareness scale.

The above data were computed by use of national norms. These norms were established from four year colleges and universities so caution should be used in the interpretation of the findings. The added tests increase the credence of the descriptive data. The perceptions of the students were not different on either the high score or low score. Personnel workers and instructors should be particularly alert to these perceptions. Primary administrators could spend time examining the environment concerning the low awareness scale. Why aren't students concerned about themselves, society, and esthetic stimuli? What role should the college assume?

Intergroup perception of the scholarship scale was found to be significantly different. AA, AS, AAS, and C perceive the environment quite differently concerning high academic achievement, serious interest in scholarship, the pursuit of knowledge for knowledge sake, or that the pursuit of knowledge is carried on rigorously and vigorously. Descriptively, scholarship was viewed at the 30th percentile. Is there something of more concern? Does the diversity of the students and programs account for this? Is this about right for a comprehensive community college? These are all

pertinent questions. This study points out that junior college norm data is needed on these topics, for more meaningful generalizing. Each college is unique unto itself. They differ from one another. This study indicates this schools relative position - but not with other community colleges. The data should be used as supplementary to the individual data already on hand. Follow-up studies should be performed so that environmental characteristics will be as up-to-date as individual data. The strengths identified should be used to build upon. The diversity should be examined but not necessarily eliminated just because the norm data came from older more established institutions.

References

Pace, C.R. CUES, college and university environment scales. Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1963.

Gelso, C.J., & Sims, D.M. Perceptions of a Junior College. Journal of College Student Personnel, 1968, 1, 40-43.

TABLE 1

Descriptive Data

Total Sample	Sample Score 66+	Percentile Score
Practicality	9	37
Community	9	37
Awareness	4	12
Propriety	14	77
Scholarship	7	30

N=67

The norm group was selected so as to conform approximately with the national distribution of enrollments in accredited colleges and universities offering the bachelor's degree or higher. (Pace, 1963) The percentile scores are based on the national norms.

TABLE 2

Descriptive Data

Subgroups	Scale Scores 66+				
	I*	II*	III*	IV*	V*
AA					
66+ score	10	10	7	13	10
percentile	43	44	23	71	45
N=22					
AS					
66+ score	6	8	2	11	8
percentile	21	31	7	58	35
N=20					
AAS					
66+ score	6	8	6	19	9
percentile	21	31	19	95	40
N=15					
C					
66+ score	5	5	5	18	12
percentile	16	17	15	93	56
N=10					

I Practicality
II Community
III Awareness
IV Propriety
V Scholarship

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TABLE 3
Returns

Variable	o	e	X^2	df
AA	22	16.75		
AS	20	16.75		
AAS	15	16.75		
C	10	16.75		
			5.1791	3

N=67

*p< .05.

**p< .01.

TABLE 4
Keyed Responses

Variable	Scales				
	I	II	III	IV	V
AA					
o	301	313	288	427	361
e	306.71	311.14	286.61	432.13	353.4
AS					
o	277	265	239	358	285
e	258.44	262.17	241.5	364.11	297.78
AAS					
o	192	211	189	288	226
e	200.73	203.62	187.57	282.8	231.28
C					
o	130	124	125	195	165
e	134.12	136.06	125.33	188.96	154.54

X^2 5.37
df 12
*p < .05.
**p < .01.

TABLE 5

Scale Comparisons

Variable	x^2	df
Practicality	1.78	3
Community	3.85	3
Awareness	1.88	3
Propriety	4.37	3
Scholarship	8.28*	3

*p< .05.
**p< .01.